

The Hill

April 22, 2004

<http://www.thehill.com/news/042204/hhs.aspx>

Outrage as HHS joins MoveOn.org

By [Alexander Bolton](#)

Some conservatives on and off the Hill are angry that the Department of Health and Human Services has teamed up with critics of the Bush administration to hold a conference on global health and reproductive rights that will likely promote policies contrary to the president's.

The conference, sponsored by the Global Health Council, will gather health experts and advocates from around the world, including International Planned Parenthood Federation, the United Nations International Family Planning Fund and the Alan Guttmacher Institute, each of which has opposed the administration's positions on abortion or reproductive health, some conservatives charge. In particular, the groups have balked at the president's endorsement of abstinence over the use of condoms.

The conference will also feature activists from MoveOn.org, a group that has spent millions of dollars on television ads attacking the president.

To the chagrin of these conservatives, the conference is being paid for in large part by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The CDC and HRSA are both divisions of the Department of Health and Human Services.

The conference will be held from June 1 to June 4 at the Omni Shoreham hotel.

The CDC, the HRSA and USAID are listed as "platinum" financial supporters of the conference, according to a recent brochure issued by the Global Health Council.

The fourth platinum-level sponsor is the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which has strongly opposed President Bush's policy on abstinence.

Featured speakers at the conference include Doortje Braeken, senior adviser for adolescents and youth at the International Planned Parenthood Federation, and Dr. Thorya Ahmed Obaid, executive director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

"They are liberal family-planning groups," said an aide to a prominent conservative in the House who works closely with socially conservative groups. "The two that we would be particularly concerned about are the International Planned Parenthood Federation and UNFPA, both of which have been denied U.S. assistance for family-planning funds."

Those organizations as well as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Family Health International, a "gold" sponsor of the conference, and the Alan Guttmacher Institute have drawn fire from conservatives for opposing Bush on sexual health issues.

"All of them are opposed to the principles announced by this administration when it comes to HIV prevention. They are the same organizations that opposed groups like ours on the Africa AIDS bill," said Michael Schwartz, the vice president of government relations at Concerned Women for America, a conservative advocacy group that promotes family values and the sanctity of life.

Lynnette Johnson Williams, the director of media relations for the Global Health Council, said that conservatives were presenting a selective review of the conference's participants.

"[It] does not mention the balance in every session of our conference," said Johnson Williams. "We have more than 2,000 conference participants from all over the world."

She noted that the Catholic Medical Mission is one of the exhibitors.

But the five brochure-featured speakers of the conference, which includes one from Planned Parenthood, do not include a speaker from a conservative-advocacy, sanctity-of-life-oriented group. And Johnson Williams could not name a conservative advocate in the special-session presentation scheduled June 4, which includes Obaid of UNFPA.

The American chapter of the Planned Parenthood Federation is co-sponsoring the March for Women's Lives in Washington this weekend along with liberal groups such as NARAL Pro-Choice America, the Feminist Majority and the National Organization for Women.

On June 1, the conference has scheduled a five-hour meeting to address the issue of unsafe abortions. Conservatives say that unsafe abortions are frequently a euphemism for illegal abortions and are often invoked in the context of arguments for legalized abortions, which abortion-rights proponents argue reduce female mortality rates.

Later that day is a two-hour reception showcasing the Alan Guttmacher Institute's latest research. Anti-abortion conservatives charge that the institute is the research arm of pro-abortion-rights advocacy groups.

On the morning of June 4, the conference will present a two-and-a-half-hour presentation on effective grassroots advocacy, showcasing "the people behind '34 Million Friends of UNFPA,' MoveOn.org, [and] Bowling for Columbine."

The conference will also include a day of lobbying Capitol Hill, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on June 1. That day will include two hours of meetings with members of Congress and their staff.

The conservative GOP aide said 34 Million Friends of UNFPA is of particular concern.

"This 34 Million Friends of UNFPA is clearly an advocacy fundraising type organization and it looks like the conference is going to be used to lobby [Congress] as well," said the aide.

"Use of taxpayer funds to lobby the government on policies is illegal," added the aide,

referring to the financial support of USAID and the Health and Human Services Department.

Kay Garvey, a spokeswoman for HRSA, said that her agency was not a sponsor of the conference "at this time."

However, Johnson Williams, spokeswoman for Global Health Council, said it was. she added that the council has negotiated with government agencies since the fall about sponsoring the conference.

USAID spokeswoman Portia Palmer said the agency "remains concerned that the initial program for the conference was tilted too far toward critics of the administration. We've instructed the Global Health Council to provide balance to the program. In particular, we asked that they bring in well-known abstinence advocates."

A spokesperson for the CDC did not return a phone call seeking comment.

The Washington Times

April 22, 2004

Inside the Beltway

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/inbeltway.htm>

By John McCaslin

Where the funds go

The Bush administration is sponsoring an event with MTV, but it's not next year's Super Bowl halftime show.

Federal agencies - including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Agency for International Development - are listed as "platinum" sponsors of the June "Youth and Health: Generation on the Edge" conference in Washington. It not only involves MTV and Planned Parenthood, but also the left-wing advocacy group MoveOn.org, which says that President Bush "can't be trusted to tell the truth to Americans."

On June 1, "Advocacy Day," activists are scheduled to lobby Congress. The next day's schedule features a "Celebrate Youth" event, honoring Bill Roedy, president of MTV Networks International.

One House Republican staffer noted that the U.N. Population Fund - prohibited by law from receiving federal funds - will be featured at the conference. "Many members are concerned about the amount of taxpayer funds from federal agencies that will be used for this conference," the staffer said. "Subsidizing conferences featuring groups which are themselves prohibited by law from receiving federal funds is, to say the least, highly questionable. America remains a nation of free speech, but the federal government is not in the business of funding all conferences or subsidizing all speakers."



Editorials/Op-Ed

April 22, 2004

HHS' reckless agenda

Politics predictably can get dirty during election years, but a new politicization of the Department of Health and Human Services has put the government squarely in the partisan mix. The odd thing about the situation at hand is that agencies in the executive branch are teaming up with groups opposed to President Bush and are weighing in with policy positions contrary to those held by the White House.

The Hill newspaper reported yesterday that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and the independent United States Agency for International Development (USAID) are working with the activist group MoveOn.org to put on a June conference on "reproductive rights" issues.

Some heads need to roll over this.

MoveOn.org is one of the most fiercely anti-Bush activist groups in the country. With more than \$5 million in cash provided by radical leftist billionaire George Soros, the group ran a contest for anti-Bush ads. Its Web site featured commercials comparing Mr. Bush to Adolf Hitler. During MoveOn.org's awards show in January, comedian Margaret Cho received a standing ovation when she said, "You know, I mean, George Bush is not Hitler. He would be if he applied himself." In November, Mr. Soros announced that defeating Mr. Bush's re-election bid "is the central focus of my life, and I'm willing to put my money where my mouth is." By funding the conference and its Lobby Congress Advocacy Day as platinum contributors, the executive agencies are explicitly using public funds to push policies contrary to those of the administration under which they operate.

Mr. Soros and MoveOn.org are not the only strange bedfellows working on this pro-abortion population-control conference with the CDC, HRSA and USAID. The International Planned Parenthood Federation, the U.N. International Family Planning Fund, the Alan Guttmacher Institute, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and MTV are also sponsors. All of these groups are expressly opposed to the Bush administration's

agenda on sexual-health issues, particularly regarding the role of abstinence to prevent HIV/AIDS, other sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy. Planned Parenthood is a global promoter of abortion-on-demand, even for young children without the knowledge of their parents.

This type of cowboy politicking represents everything that is bad about bureaucracies that run out of control. A letter of protest by more than a dozen Republican congressmen points out that, "Various provisions of existing law, as well as provisions in the Fiscal Year 2004 Consolidated Appropriations Act, make it illegal [for government agencies] to fund lobbying activities." Readers can share their views about this misuse of the civil service with the department heads responsible for the mess: Elizabeth M. Duke, Health Resources and Services Administration: (301) 443-2086; Julie Louise Gerberding, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: (404) 639-3311; Andrew S. Natsios, USAID: (202) 712-0000.

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

<http://www.suntimes.com/output/novak/cst-edt-novak25.html>

Chicago Sun-Times

April 25, 2004

BY ROBERT NOVAK SUN-TIMES COLUMNIST



Robert Novak

Funding the left

The Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Agency for International Development dropped sponsorship of a conference in Washington June 1-4, "Youth and Health: Generation on the Edge," that espouses left-wing causes after conservative Republican congressmen protested.

The Bush-bashing MoveOn.org, funded by billionaire investor George Soros, is one of the conference's presenters. Also included are the International Planned Parenthood Federation, which does not qualify for federal family planning grants because it advocates abortion, and the pro-abortion United Nations Population Fund.

The House Republican Study Committee drafted a letter to HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson and AID administrator Andrew Natsios expressing "great concern and disappointment" over funding of the conference by their agencies.

The Washington Times

April 26, 2004

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/national/20040426-011659-1653r.htm>

White House to pull support for conference --

By Charles Hurt

The Bush administration is scrapping plans to sponsor a major global health and reproductive rights conference that features liberal advocacy groups, including several pro-choice organizations and MoveOn.org, which is spending millions of dollars on negative ads to defeat President Bush.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will withdraw its support today, according to a senior government official.

"We expect they will be notified officially" today, a senior government official said of USAID's decision to withdraw from the June gathering in Washington.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which said it never formally agreed to help fund "Youth and Health: Generation on the Edge," denounced the conference organizers late Friday for including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) -- both divisions of HHS -- in a recent promotional brochure.

The Global Health Council, which is organizing the four-day conference, included USAID, the CDC and HRSA as "platinum" or top-level financial sponsors in the brochure that the council distributed last week.

News of the funding angered many on Capitol Hill, especially conservatives who don't think the government should help promote pro-choice groups such as the International Planned Parenthood Organization and the U.N. International Family Planning Fund.

Both groups, along with the fiercely anti-Bush MoveOn.org, will participate in the conference.

"The conference has increasingly moved from a teaching forum to a platform for expressing partisan political views, and that's evidenced by the inclusion of the political organization MoveOn.org," a senior government official said.

Among the speakers at the event -- set for June 1 to 4 at the Omni Shoreham

Hotel -- are Doortje Braeken of Planned Parenthood and Thorya Ahmed Obaid of the U.N. Population Fund.

Both organizations are strongly critical of the Bush administration's pro-life stance, and both have been denied U.S. government funding for their family-planning efforts, which include support for abortion.

Just yesterday, for example, Planned Parenthood, along with other liberal groups such as the National Organization for Women, co-sponsored the March for Women's Lives around the White House and on the National Mall.

Also of concern is that one day of the event, titled "Advocacy Day," is devoted to participants in the conference going to Capitol Hill to lobby Senate and congressional offices.

"A large portion of this conference is devoted to lobbying, and government appropriations are not allowed to be used for lobbyist activities," the government official said on the condition of anonymity.

HHS spokesman Bill Pierce said, "After careful review, we determined that we were not going to fund this conference due to concerns we had about federal funds being used for lobby purposes."

But that decision was made before outraged conservatives began calling USAID and HHS offices last week demanding to know why they were funding the conference, Mr. Pierce said.

"We also have concerns that they used our name and logo in their brochures without our approval or authorization because we had not officially committed funds," he said.

It was not clear how much government money had been committed to the conference or how much the Global Health Council had expected to get from the government. Nor is the total budget for the conference clear.

For USAID's part, it had pledged about \$190,000, according to the government source, which was significantly pared back from earlier years. From 2000 to last year, USAID support for the annual conference had fallen by more than 20 percent.

Health Council's Chief Criticizes Administration

By Ceci Connolly

Washington Post Staff Writer

Friday, June 4, 2004; Page A03

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A13851-2004Jun3.html>

The president of the Global Health Council castigated federal health officials this week for abruptly ending 30 years of support for the private agency's work, saying the Bush administration caved in to election-year pressure from a "small clique of right-wing extremists."

In an unusually harsh speech Tuesday, Nils Daulaire accused the administration of choosing the political wedge issue of abortion over the free exchange of ideas when it rescinded \$365,000 in grants and discouraged participation in the council's international conference, "Youth and Health: Generation on the Edge."

"It is the politics of health -- more correctly, the exploitation of sensitive global health issues for domestic political purposes -- that has kept them away," he said.

House Republican staffers and groups such as the Traditional Values Coalition lobbied the State and Health and Human Services departments to sever ties with the council because some participants hold views in conflict with administration policies on abortion and sex education.

Judie Brown, president of the antiabortion American Life League, said the council is mistaking "reproductive rights" for a medical issue.

"Pregnancy is a very normal and healthy state for a woman to experience; abortion is totally abnormal," she said. "He's railing at us, the pro-lifers, because he wants abortion to be protected and funded by the government."

Daulaire said he was not surprised by the work of the antiabortion leaders but "what was surprising -- and deeply disappointing -- was that our government's health policy leaders did not respond with the truth."

The flash point between the two sides is a policy known as the Mexico City Policy, initiated by President Ronald Reagan and revived by President George W. Bush, that prohibits any clinic abroad that receives U.S. aid to discuss abortion with clients.

For decades -- including the first three years of the current administration -- the U.S. government has not only subsidized the annual conference but also sent high-ranking health officials to speak at the gathering. Three years ago HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson discussed women's health, and last year Julie L. Gerberding, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, spoke about severe acute respiratory syndrome.

By withdrawing funding and by discouraging federal employees from attending the Washington conference, officials "sacrificed the principles of participation and respectful dialogue to spurious allegations," Daulaire said.

HHS spokesman Bill Pierce rejected charges that the decision was politically motivated, saying the stumbling block was a law prohibiting federal dollars to be spent on lobbying. He said the group's plans to hold an "advocacy day" on Capitol Hill violated that rule.

"We don't lobby," Daulaire replied. He said organizations as diverse as Boeing Co. and the National Association of Evangelicals have held advocacy days and received federal money.

When the controversy arose in late April, conference organizers were reluctant to criticize the administration, saying they hoped to reach a compromise. But when that did not happen, Daulaire said, he decided to devote his entire keynote address to the dispute because "we have a responsibility to stand up and challenge those who hold positions of public trust when they are wrong -- and on this, they are wrong."

National Public Radio (NPR)

SHOW: Morning Edition (11:00 AM AM ET) - NPR

June 3, 2004 Thursday

Global Health Council's annual conference will not be attended by US public health workers because of controversy over reproductive health policies of some organizations

ANCHORS: STEVE INSKEEP
REPORTERS: BRENDA WILSON

STEVE INSKEEP, host:

This is MORNING EDITION from NPR News. I'm Steve Inskeep.

For years, federal agencies involved in international health have supported the annual conference of the Global Health Council. This year, US public health workers and health workers from developing countries who rely on the US government to pay their way will not be attending. Conservative groups complained about the reproductive health policies of some international organizations attending the conference. NPR's Brenda Wilson reports.

BRENDA WILSON reporting:

The Global Health Council was a non-profit organization with over a thousand members, international health workers from more than 300 public, private and government institutions, from the Albanian Association of Internal Medicine to Wyeth Laboratories, and the council has long maintained close ties with the US government. But the council's president, Nils Daulaire, says the government isn't going to be at the conference this year because the Bush administration caved in to what Daulaire called a conservative clique.

Mr. NILS DAULAIRE (Global Health Council): Not one person in that clique has ever spent a day in a clinic in a developing country, or an hour at this conference face-to-face with any one of you to understand the service you give daily to those in need. And they have clearly never spent a minute reflecting on the global cost in human lives that might result from acting out their Washingtoncentric political games.

WILSON: Among the complaints from conservatives were that the conference would include speakers from the International Planned Parenthood Federation and the United Nations Population Fund, groups conservatives have long opposed because of their abortion policies and their work in China. Andrea Lafferty of the conservative Traditional

Values Coalition says they are opposed to groups that work in China because of what investigations have shown.

Ms. ANDREA LAFFERTY (Traditional Values Coalition): Time and again they have found that family planning has turned into forced abortion. They've gone in under cover to these quote, unquote, "family planning clinics," and they're not, you know, birth control. They're not the rhythm method. They are doing abortions, forced abortions.

WILSON: But if the organization isn't doing it, it's just working with organizations that do...

Ms. LAFFERTY: But there's a shell game. They, you know, play a shell game with the money.

WILSON: Daulaire reserved much of his anger for officials inside the Bush administration, from the United States Agency for International Development, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, who, he reminded, had been cordially received in previous years.

Mr. DAULAIRE: Yet when their agencies' participation in this conference was attacked by these extremists, two government agencies and the premier public health institution in the country, perhaps the world, quickly bowed to election-year political pressure. They sacrificed the principles of participation and respectful dialogue to spurious allegations. They ignored the evidence and their own experience and they bolted.

WILSON: A spokesman for the Department of Health and Human Services says that the government couldn't fund an organization engaged in lobbying. Daulaire says there is no lobbying, just advocacy to educate Congress about health issues. He says the cut-off hurt many health workers on the front line in developing countries who won't be able to come.

Mr. DAULAIRE: We can all get books and sit at home, but we all know that when you are face-to-face with somebody who's a real expert, when you bring your experiences to bear on somebody else's expertise or vice versa, that's where you really get advances in the field.

WILSON: And when this day passes, he says, he looks forward to public health workers in the government joining them again. Brenda Wilson, NPR News.